Tahfizh Curriculum in Indonesia: A Sociological Approach

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Introduction

• Indonesia is a Muslim majority country that constitutes religious education as a compulsory subject in all level.

• Islamic education in various forms have been important parts of Indonesian education before the country’s independence in 1945.

• Islamic Schools were not considered as formal education until 1975.
Types of Muslim School

• Steenbrink (1986) identifies three types of Islamic schools:
  – Pesantren
  – Madrasah
  – Sekolah

• The types continue to evolve
Pesantren

• The oldest type of Indonesian education;
• Normally a Pesantren consists of:
  1. students (called: Santri),
  2. Teacher (Ustaz),
  3. Dormitory,
  4. Masjid, and
  5. Learning Islamic Reference (Dhofier, 1994).
• Independent curriculum: Mostly learning Islamic knowledge such as Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh and Aqidah
Madrasah

- A day school that teaches both Secular and Religious education subjects;
- Islamic daily activities, such as reading Quran and Collective Prayer in the afternoon;
- Muslim dress-code for staff and students;
- Religious education curriculum is designed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs;
- Secular subjects following the Ministry of Education Curriculum.
Sekolah Islam (Islamic School)

- Day school for Muslim students;
- Daily Islamic activities, not as strict as madrasah;
- Curriculum is supervised by the Ministry of Education;
- Independent religious education subjects.
Evolution of Islamic Schools

Traditional Pesantren

Modern Pesantren

Traditional Pesantren

Modern Pesantren

Traditional Pesantren

Modern Pesantren

Madrasah

Madrasah

Madrasah

Islamic School
Question

• Why there is an increase to tahfiz program in Indonesian Muslim schools?
• What is the relationship between the increase of tahfiz program with the development of Indonesian Muslim society?
Method

• Three Educational Institutions:
  – Program Tahfiz Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum, Lido, Sukabumi, West Jawa
  – Pondok Pesantren Darul Quran, Cikarang, West Jawa.
  – Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 4, Jakarta Selatan.

• Method
  – Interview with Key Person on each Institution
Tahfizh Curriculum

• Reason for existence
  – The belief that the Quran is the central idea of being Muslims.
  – Increasing demand for Muslim parents to have their children memorizing the Quran, if not all, may be parts of it.
I argue, furthermore, that the mission of contemporary Quranic schooling, with Quranic memorization at its core, is concerned with developing spirituality and morality as well as with providing an alternative to public education, when the availability and quality of public schooling is limited.

(Boyle, 2006, 480: Memorization and Learning...
# Islamic education subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>@ Pesantren</th>
<th>@ Madrasah</th>
<th>@ School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Hadith</td>
<td>2. Aqeedah &amp; Akhlaq</td>
<td>2. Reading the Quran (some include tahfeezh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Islamic History</td>
<td>3. Fiqh &amp; Ushul Fiqh</td>
<td>3. Islamic prayers</td>
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<td>4. Aqeedah/Tauheed</td>
<td>4. Islamic History</td>
<td>+ Non-religion-oriented subjects</td>
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<td>5. Fiqh (Shariah)</td>
<td>5. Arabic Language</td>
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<td>6. Ushul Fiqh (Jurisprudence)</td>
<td>+ Non-religion-oriented subjects</td>
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<td>7. Akhlaq/Sufism</td>
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<td>8. Arabic language</td>
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<td>9. Arabic grammar</td>
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Curriculum Combination

School/Madrasah Curriculum

Pesantren Curriculum

Quran Memorization

Tahfizh Madrasah/Pesantren
Social Expectation

• Increasing students number that attended Tahfizh school, e.g.,
  – Darul Ulum change from a tahfizh program to a tahfizh school
  – Darul Quran from 8 students in 2005 -> 20 in 2006 -> grades 7 to 12 (more than 200 students)

• People with good akhlaq (attitude/morality)
“The relationship between a society and its curriculum is reciprocal.”
(Herbert M. Kliebard, 1992)
What does the trend of tahfizh school in Indonesia mean?
Indonesian Muslim phenomena

Hajj Waiting list: 13.5 years (national average)

Muslim Awareness of Religious Issues

Increasing number of masjids and Muslim schools
Changing Curriculum = Changing Society

Prior to 1970s
- Informal Islamic School
- Recognized Islamic Schools

2000 onwards
- Increasing Islamic School
- Increasing Tahfizh School

Society
- Secular, Less religious
- Recognize the importance of religion
- More practicing Muslims
- More Religious Awareness
Further questions?

- Are Indonesian Muslim moving towards stronger Muslim communities or
- Are they moving from substantive Islam to normative Islam?
- In which direction Indonesian Islamic education should move forward?
Thank you
جزاك الله خيرا